

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2052

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Ways & Means, March 23, 2009

Title: An act relating to delaying implementation of the health insurance partnership.

Brief Description: Delaying the implementation of the health insurance partnership.

Sponsors: House Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Representative Cody; by request of Health Care Authority).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/10/09, 62-34.

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 3/23/09 [DP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Tom, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Fairley, Hobbs, Keiser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, McDermott, Murray, Oemig, Regala and Rockefeller.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Carrell, Honeyford, Parlette, Pflug and Schoesler.

Staff: Elaine Deschamps (786-7441)

Background: The Blue Ribbon Commission bill passed during the 2007 Legislative Session established the Health Insurance Partnership (HIP) within the Health Care Authority (Authority) to provide health care premium subsidies for low-income employees of small employers. Small employers must attest that they are not offering health insurance and at least 50 percent of their employees are low-wage workers. A seven-member Health Insurance Partnership Board (Board) was established. Members include the Authority administrator and individuals with expertise in the health insurance market and benefit design. The Board designated the health plans eligible for premium subsidies, the benchmark plan for the development of subsidy amounts, the minimum employee participation requirements, and the minimum employer contribution.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill: Processing enrollment applications for the HIP is delayed from January 1, 2009, until January 1, 2011, or earlier, subject to sufficient state or federal funding being provided for this purpose. The requirement that the partnership begin offering coverage no later than March 1, 2009, is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: As a result of the November revenue forecast, the delay of implementation of this program was necessary in order to achieve the Governor's directed budget reductions.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Richard Onizuka, Health Care Authority.